



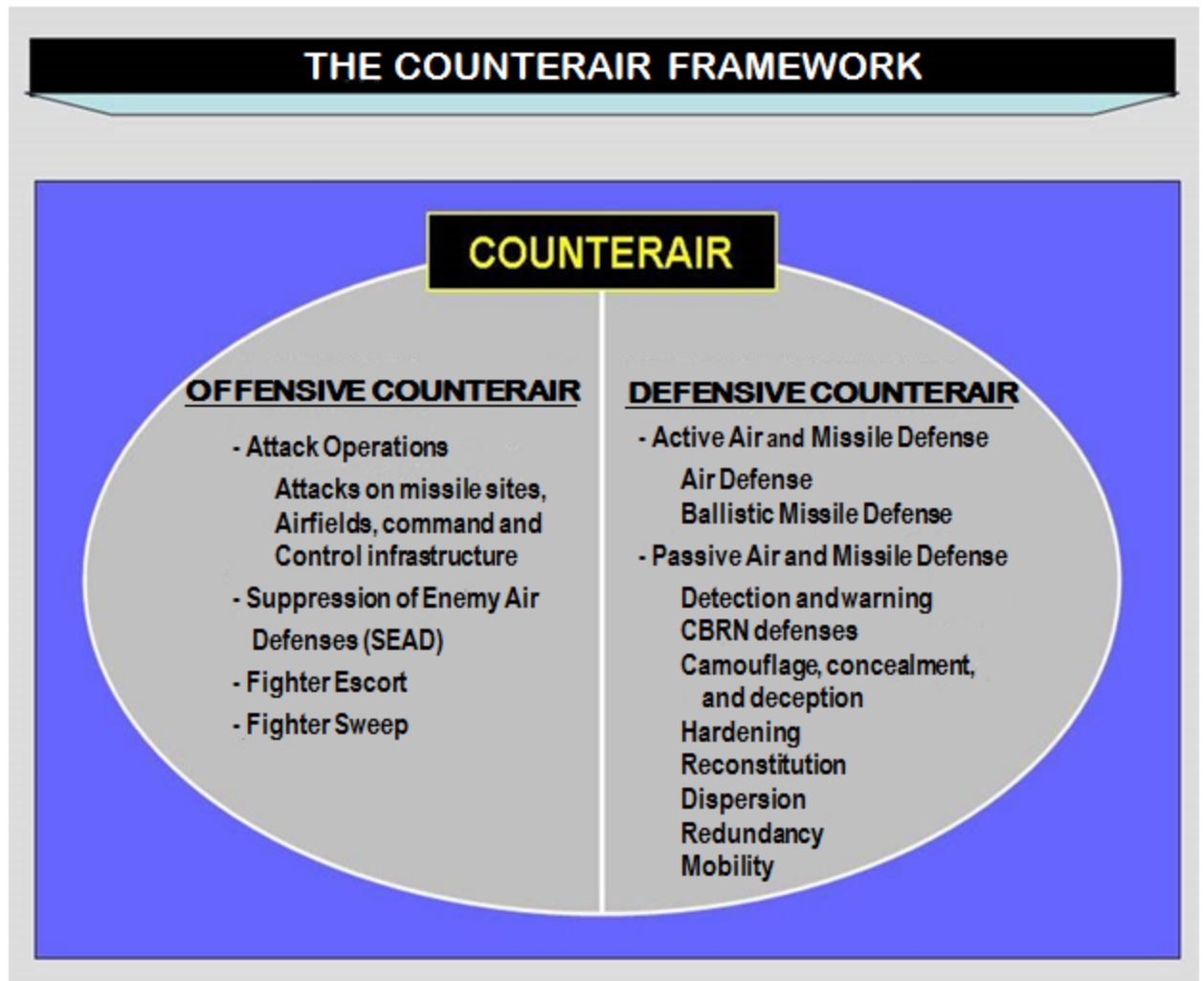
## COUNTERAIR FRAMEWORK

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Like other [air](#), [space](#), and [cyberspace](#) operations, [counterair](#) is fundamentally effects based. This means that counterair operations are designed, planned, executed, assessed, and adapted in order to influence or change system behavior to achieve desired outcomes. Effective counterair operations should be part of a larger, coherent plan that logically ties the overall operation's end state to all objectives and effects and tasks. This plan should guide execution and the means of gaining feedback; measuring success must be planned for and evaluated throughout and after execution. This approach should consider all potential instruments of power and all available means to achieve desired effects, and must consider the entire operational environment. The [operational environment](#) is a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander (JP 1-02). Non-military instruments of national power may not seem relevant to counterair operations, but they can be decisively important in certain circumstances, as when diplomatic efforts permit or deny basing or overflight rights that critically impact counterair efforts. Conversely, counterair capability can help deter hostile adversary action by providing a credible military threat to enemy maneuver and freedom to attack.

In an effects-based framework, effects fall into two broad categories: direct effects, or those immediate outcomes created by "blue" (friendly) actions, and indirect effects, higher-order effects created upon "red" (adversary) or "gray" (neutral) actors within the operational environment. The counterair framework, illustrated in the figure ***The Counterair Framework***, shows typical "blue" actions taken to create effects in support of counterair operations.

The counterair framework describes a number of different tasks or missions, each of which is described below. Note that in many cases the distinctions between the categories may blur. For example, an attack on an enemy SAM site may be considered an attack operation or [suppression of enemy air defenses](#) (SEAD). The finer distinctions do not substantially change the way operations are conducted, but may help Airmen to understand the elements of [offensive counterair](#) (OCA) and [defensive counterair](#) (DCA).



**The Counterair Framework  
(Based on Joint Publication 3-01)**

### **Offensive Counterair**

Different types of OCA operations are used to achieve specific counterair effects. Tasked units normally have decentralized execution authority and are given significant latitude in the detailed planning and coordination of the tasks.

- ★ **Attack operations.** Attack operations are intended to destroy, disrupt, or degrade counterair targets on the ground and may be accomplished through kinetic or non-kinetic effects. These missions are directed against enemy air and missile threats, their C2, and their support infrastructure (e.g., airfields, launch sites, launchers, fuel, supplies, and runways). The main goal is to prevent enemy employment of air and missile assets.
- ★ **Suppression of enemy air defenses.** SEAD is an OCA mission designed to neutralize, destroy, or degrade enemy surface-based air defenses by destructive or disruptive means. SEAD requirements may vary according to mission requirements,

system capabilities, and threat complexity. SEAD planners should coordinate with ISR operators to ensure collection and exploitation opportunities are considered prior to destroying or disrupting emitters. SEAD operations fall into three categories:

- ☆☆ Area of responsibility (AOR)/joint operating area (JOA) air defense suppression: Operations conducted against specific enemy air defense systems to destroy, disrupt, or degrade their effectiveness. It targets high payoff air defense assets, resulting in the greatest degradation of the enemy's total system and enabling effective friendly operations.
- ☆☆ Localized suppression: Operations normally confined to geographical areas associated with specific ground targets or friendly transit routes, contributing to local air superiority.
- ☆☆ Opportune suppression: Usually unplanned, including aircrew self-defense and attack against targets of opportunity. The joint force commander (JFC) or joint force air component commander (JFACC) normally establishes specific [rules of engagement](#) (ROE) to permit airborne assets the ability to conduct opportune suppression.
- ☆ **Fighter escort.** Escorts are aircraft assigned to protect other aircraft during a mission (JP 1-02). Escort missions are flown over enemy territory to target and engage enemy aircraft and air defense systems. Friendly aircraft en route to or from a target area may be assigned escort aircraft to protect them from enemy air-to-air and surface-to-air threats. Typically, escort to low-observable ("stealth") aircraft requires special consideration and planning at the [air operations center](#) (AOC) level.
- ☆ **Fighter sweep.** An offensive mission by fighter aircraft to seek out and destroy enemy aircraft or targets of opportunity in a designated area.

## Defensive Counterair

Several types of DCA tasks also help to provide a permissive environment for friendly air action.

- ☆ **Active air and missile defense.** Active air and missile defense is defensive action taken to destroy, nullify, or reduce the effectiveness of air and missile threats against friendly forces and assets. It includes actions to counter enemy manned and unmanned aircraft, cruise missiles, air-to-surface missiles, and ballistic missiles.

These actions are closely integrated to form essential DCA capabilities, but may involve different defensive weapon systems or tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP).

- ☆ **Passive air and missile defense.** Passive defense includes all measures, other than active defense, taken to minimize the effectiveness of hostile air and missile threats against friendly forces and assets. It consists of several categories of activities. These are briefly summarized in the section on execution considerations for passive defense:

- ☆☆ Detection and warning.
- ☆☆ [Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear \(CBRN\) defenses.](#)
- ☆☆ Camouflage, concealment, and deception.
- ☆☆ Hardening.
- ☆☆ Reconstitution.
- ☆☆ Dispersion.
- ☆☆ Redundancy.
- ☆☆ Mobility.
- ☆☆ Electronic and infrared countermeasures.
- ☆☆ Low-observable (stealth) technology.

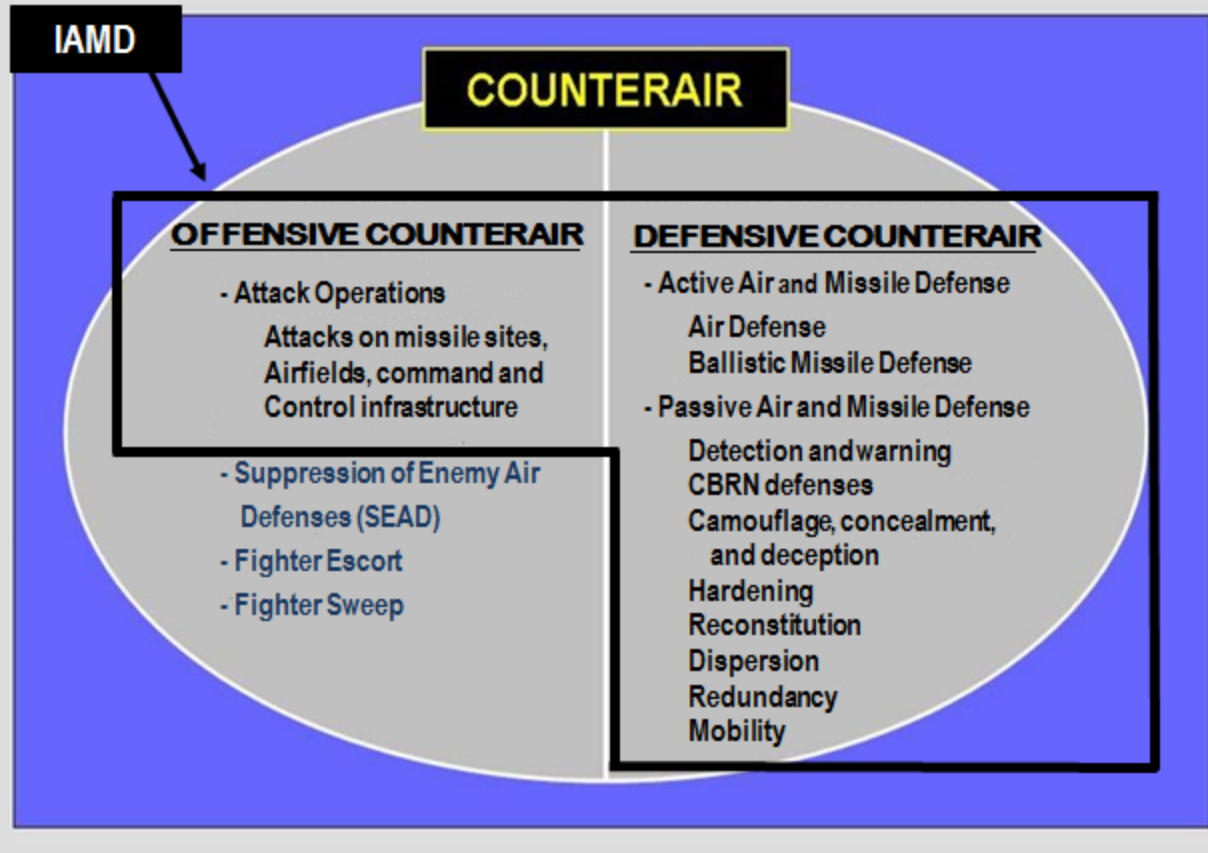
The list of potential counterair effects is endless and will vary from operation to operation. Nonetheless, there are certain considerations applicable to planning, executing, and assessing counterair effects, which are detailed in the following sections.

### Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD)

IAMD is the integration of capabilities and overlapping operations to defend the homeland and United States national interests, protect the joint force, and enable freedom of action by negating an adversary's ability to achieve adverse effects from their air and missile capabilities. At the theater level, IAMD is a subset of counterair and an approach which combines OCA attack operations and DCA operations (see *The Counterair-IAMD Relationship* figure below) to achieve the joint force commander's desired effects. Within the IAMD approach, OCA attack operations are commanded by the [JFACC](#) and DCA is commanded by the [AADCC](#). The JFACC is responsible for integration between the offensive and defensive components of IAMD. The OCA attack operations component of IAMD will, in all likelihood, not be planned and executed in isolation but rather will be a part of a wider offensive effort against a variety of adversary targets.

Airmen consider IAMD as a subset of activities within the larger Counterair framework. From an Airman's perspective, the IAMD model carries the potential to split activities between offense and defense, which, from an Airman's perspective, may fracture unity of command and unity of effort. Thus, **Airmen should always advocate the counterair framework vice IAMD when discussing countering air and missile threats, even in a joint context.**

## THE COUNTERAIR – IAMD RELATIONSHIP



The Counterair-IAMD Relationship